



**Testimony of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center
to the Public Health Committee regarding
House Bill 5286 An Act Requiring Labeling Of Electronic Cigarettes
February 28, 2014**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts about *House Bill 5286 An Act Requiring Labeling Of Electronic Cigarettes*. My name is Dr. Michelle Cloutier, and I am the Director of the Asthma Center and the leader of the Hartford Childhood Wellness Alliance at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center and a Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. I am submitting this testimony as a pediatrician and lung specialist in support of this proposed bill.

E-cigarettes were ostensibly designed to feed people's nicotine addiction without the other toxic substances in conventional cigarettes. While there is debate about the purpose of e-cigarettes, there are a number of important facts. The first is that smoking remains the single biggest cause of preventable death in the United States (followed closely now by obesity). Cigarettes are the only known product that, when used as intended, make people sick. Most smokers today started in adolescence and most are unable to quit by the time they are 18 years of age. Here in Connecticut, 12% of middle school children and 37% of high school youth have tried smoking.

E-cigarettes have made smoking attractive to young people and are being marketed to young people. Celebrities use them and they come in flavors like cherry, vanilla or cola. In my opinion, E-cigarettes are a gateway to traditional cigarettes for young people. E-cigarettes are also being advertised to youth and smoking is once again being made to appear attractive, cool and sexy. "Blu e-cigarettes look and taste like a real cigarette. Make the switch to Blu today." Young people are not using e-cigarettes to quit smoking but as a starting product to smoking. The health hazards of e-cigarettes are not known. Nicotine has no known health benefit and the vehicle, propylene glycol, is a potential lung irritant, the long term consequences of which are not known. Preventing smoking is the most effective strategy to decrease smoking rates in Connecticut and in youth and restricting access is one step to achieving that goal. I urge you to support this bill to require labeling on electronic nicotine delivery systems and all efforts to prevent smoking in youth.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Jane Baird, Connecticut Children's Director of Government Relations, at 860-837-5557.